

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINORITY AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1303
ANSWERED ON:08.03.2007
DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIM GIRL CHILD
Fanthome Shri Francis

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is examining provisions to have a single window interpretation of 'Sharia';
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the other steps taken by the Government to improve the educational and social rights of the Muslim girl child and also to ensure their legitimate freedom of expression?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (A.R. ANTULAY)

(a) and (b): It is the consistent policy of the Central Government not to interfere in the personal laws of minorities unless the necessary initiative comes from a sizeable cross-section of the community concerned itself.

(c) The Government of India has initiated the following schemes meant for minorities, including Muslim girls, to improve their educational and social rights:-

(i) Kasturba Gandhi Bal Vidyals (KGBV) are being set up for girls at upper primary level in educationally backward blocks of the country where a minimum 75% seats are for SC/ST/OBC/Minorities; 210 KGBVs have been sanctioned in minority dominated blocks;

(ii) Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) has launched a scholarship scheme for meritorious girl students belonging to minorities in 2000-2004;

(iii) A new programme of 20,000 merit-cum means based scholarship scheme to encourage students belonging to minorities to pursue higher studies is being launched;

(iv) The Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Community Polytechnics also give special emphasis on educational upliftment of women;

(v) The Area Intensive and Madarsa Modernization Programme for Educationally Weaker Section of minority also emphasizes on women education;

(vi) Under the scheme for providing hostel facilities for girls studying in secondary and higher secondary schools, voluntary agencies, including minority institutions, are being given grants-in-aid to promote modern school education;

(vii) The University Grants Commission is also providing financial assistance, to set up girls hostels, to minority educational institutions.